

Cp 378
SI4N1

HINTS ON CONFIRMATION AT ST. MARY'S
SCHOOL

1869

THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA



THE COLLECTION OF
NORTH CAROLINIANA
PRESENTED BY

Mrs. Sprague Silver

Cp378
Sl4N1

HINTS

ON THE

RITE OF CONFIRMATION,

ADDRESSED TO THE PUPILS

OF

St. Mary's School.



RALEIGH, N. C.

1869.



HINTS

ON THE

RITE OF CONFIRMATION,

Addressed

TO THE PUPILS OF

St. Mary's School,

RALEIGH, N. C.

1869.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

<https://archive.org/details/hintsonriteofcon00smed>

Cp 378
S14N1

HINTS

ON

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION.

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE RELATING TO
CONFIRMATION, WHICH MUST BE CARE-
FULLY STUDIED, AND OUGHT TO BE COM-
MITTED TO MEMORY.

Acts viii: 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17.

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women,

p45785
55

Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.

Who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

For as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Acts xix: 1—7.

“And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,

And he said unto them, Unto what

then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's Baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

"And all the men were about twelve."

Hebrews vi: 1, 2.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement."

From the first of these passages we

learn that Philip the Deacon, was the instrument by his miracles and preaching of converting the Samaritans, and that he baptized them; but that Peter and John, two of the apostles, went from Jerusalem to Samaria to lay their hands on them.

The order of religious exercises among the Samaritan converts, was the following: Repentance, Faith, Baptism, under the ministrations of Philip, and the laying on of Hands, or their confirmation, by the apostles.

Thus the passage teaches us the qualifications for confirmation, the obligation of it, and the officer, by whom it is administered. The qualifications are repentance whereby we truly sorrow for our sins, and really forsake them; Faith whereby we steadfastly receive all the doctrines, precepts, and promises of the Gospel as the word of God, which alone is able to save our souls; and Baptism, whereby in our infancy, or by our own

mature choice, we have become the members of Christ, the children of God, and the inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.

The obligation to receive confirmation, or the laying on of Hands, is manifest from the fact that, like baptism, it was received by all the Samaritan converts.

The officers to administer it, are evidently the Apostles, or, as their successors are now called, the Bishops of the Church.

Philip the *Deacon* could preach and baptise; but he could not confirm. The *Apostles* Peter and John, went down to Samaria, and laid their hands on the converts.

From the passage in the 19th chapter of the Acts, we learn the same truths. The disciples mentioned in it had received the baptism of repentance from John. They were baptized by St. Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus, of course after a profession of faith in Him.

They had, therefore, Repentance,

Faith and Baptism. Then Paul laid his hands on them, or as we should say, confirmed them. Here are precisely the same exercises and in the same order, Repentance, Faith, Baptism, the laying on of Hands.

But says an objector, did not miraculous gifts accompany this laying on of Hands, and was not the rite of a temporary nature, designed to cease, when these miraculous gifts were no longer conferred?

To this objection we reply in the words of the 1st, and 2nd verses of the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Here we have Repentance, Faith, Baptism, and the Laying on of

Hands, reckoned among the *principles* of the doctrine of Christ, in connection with Resurrection of the dead and Eternal Judgment.

Does not the order in which the laying on of Hands is here mentioned show unmistakeably that it is the same, of which we have instances in the case of the Samaritan and Ephesian converts? If so, is it not a *principle* of the Doctrine of Christ, and therefore of permanent and universal obligation in his Church?

To these questions the voice of the universal Church has always answered in the affirmative, and by it the apostolic rite of confirmation has been handed down to us, tracing its origin and its authority to these passages of Holy Writ.

Going back during a period of little more than 300 years, we find the “laying on of Hands” prevailing every where among Christians whose ministry supplied the Officer, alone competent to this

function; while during the 1500 years which preceded that period, from the days of the Apostles down, it was universal in the church.

We think then it is clearly established that the “laying on of hands” after repentance, faith, and baptism, is an ordinance of the gospel, obligatory upon all the followers of Christ.

Being an outward, visible, and impressive sign of allegiance, it is the method in which the children of the Church declare their renunciation of the world, and their determination by God’s help to lead a sober, righteous and Godly life.

The circumstances of the Church in these latter days, make it peculiarly interesting and valuable in this connection. The children of most Christian parents are admitted to baptism in their infancy. It is the theory, the wish, the prayer, the expectation of the Churh, that being thus made the members of Christ, the children of God, and the inheritors of the King-

dom of Heaven, they should be trained up by their parents and sponsors "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and made to lead the rest of their life, according to this beginning," so that when arrived at an age to "refuse the evil and choose the good," they should be prepared and disposed to assume for themselves in the "laying on of Hands," the vows and promises of their baptism, and thus secure a right to eat the children's bread, and drink of their cup, at the table of their Lord. But alas, owing in part to the failure of their spiritual guardians, and in part to the ungodliness of the world around them, too generally, their baptismal robes are soiled with the pollution of wilful and grievous sins; while often, they wander far away from their "father's house," and retain scarce a single trace of their adoption into his family. Immersed in the pursuits and pleasures of this world, exclusively, they are not to be distinguished from its most

devoted followers. At length, however, a voice reaches them in their estrangement, reminding them of their forfeited privileges and neglected duties; and calling upon them, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Then in the tones of the blessed Saviour they hear, “whosoever, shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven.” Pricked to the heart with a sense of their departure from the ways of God, truly sorry for their folly and wickedness, sincerely turning to a sober, righteous, and Godly life, and heartily believing the gracious promises which lure their return, how adapted to their wants, how beautiful in their eyes, how welcome to their hearts and how appropriate, impressive, solemn, and affecting in the sight of all, must seem that

simple rite, by means of which they are enabled to come out from the world, to separate themselves from the ungodly, to join the ranks of Christ's disciples, and thus to confess him before angels and before men, while in the "laying on of Hands," by God's chief minister upon earth, they receive the assurance of a welcome back to their father's house, and a foretaste of the grace, through which they are hereafter "to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, whereunto they are called," and, in this holy rite, "have professed a good profession before many witnesses."

What wonder, that in view of its scriptural authority, and its intrinsic beauty and utility, our Church has shown her sense of its necessity by ordering that none shall be admitted to the Holy communion, until such time, as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

Do you then, my dear child, feel yourself to be a sinner, exposed to the wrath of God, and utterly without resource of hope, except in his boundless mercy through Jesus Christ ? Do you repent of your sins being truly sorry for them, and heartily striving to forake them, and to turn unto the Lord your God ? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ; that He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world ; that He so loved you as to die upon the cross for you ; that He has bought you by his own precious blood ; that His is the only name given under Heaven whereby you can be saved ? Do you desire to glorify Him in your body, and your spirit, which are his ; to come out from the world, and confess Him before men, as your Lord and your God ; to present yourself to Him a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable in His sight, as is your reasonable service ; for his sake to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to

live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works? Oh do these questions touch your heart, and does it respond, Lord, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"; "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief"; Lord, by the aid of thy Holy Spirit, I will take up my "cross, and follow thee," striving "to keep the commandments of my God"; then, I may say to you, now is the accepted time for your confirmation in these good desires and purposes. Now you are meet to receive that grace of the Holy Spirit, which is imparted in the laying on of Hands. Now you are prepared, in humility, but in faith, and hope, and love, to approach that table which a Saviour's love has spread, to which confirmation

is a title and a welcome, and at which, you will receive such supplies of grace, in your times of need, as shall nourish your soul unto everlasting life.

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

To be devoutly pondered by the Candidate for Confirmation.

Repentance.—Ps. li. Joel ii: 12, 13, Daniel 12: 3–10. Mat. iii: 1–12. Luke xiii: 1–3. Acts iii: 19–21. Rom. ii: 4. 2 Cor. vii: 9–11. Luke xxii: 62. Luke xv.

Faith.—Heb. xi. Mark ix: 24. Matt. xv: 22–28. John iii: 14–21, also 36. Acts xiii: 38, 39. Rom. iii: 19–28. Rom. v: 1. Gal. iii: 16–20. James ii: 20–23.

Baptism.—Mark xvi: 16. Matt xxviii: 19. John iii: 1–7. Acts ii: 37–39. Acts ix: 18. Acts xxii: 12–16. Acts xvi: 25–34. Rom. vi: 3–13. Gal. iii: 26, 27. 1 Cor. xii: 12–13, 27. Eph. v: 25–26. 1 Pet. iii: 21, 22. Tit. iii: 5, 6.

Obedience.—Ps i. Ps xv. Ps xix: 7–11. 1 Sam. xv: 22. Matt. vii: 21. John viii: 31, 32. John vii: 16, 17.

John xiv: 15. John xv: 8-14. John xiii: 34, 35. Rom. xii. 1 Cor. xiii. Eph. vi: 10-18. 2 Cor. v: 13, 14, 15, 17. Phil. iii: 7-21. Col. iii. 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.

Warning.—Prov. 1: 22-33. Matt. xi: 26. Luke xii: 20. Matt. xiii: 41, 42. Matt. xxv: 31-33, also 41-46. Mark ix: 43-48. 2 Thess. i: 6-10. 2 Pet. iii: 3-14.

Encouragement.—Matt. xviii: 2-5. Mark x: 13-16. Luke v: 30-32. Luke vii: 44-54. Luke xv. Ps ciii. Ps cxlv. Isaiah i: 18. Is. lv: 1-3. John iii: 16. Rom. v: 8. Rom viii: 32. 1 John iv: 7-11. Matt. xi: 28-30. Rev. xxii: 17. Rev. vii: 9-17.

Blessed Lord who hast caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of the holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of

everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

BRIEF HEADS OF SELF EXAMINATION FOR THE CANDIDATE.

1. Do I feel that I am a sinner in the sight of God: that in thought, word, and deed, I daily offend his divine majesty most justly provoking his wrath and indignation against me?

2. Do I realize the horrid nature of sin, as a transgression of the holy law of God: as the introducer of death into the world and all our woe, as the cause of the present misery and eternal ruin of the souls of men; and, above all, as requiring for its forgiveness the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the death and sacrifice of the divine Redeemer?

3. Do I feel my *guilt* as a sinner, knowing that I have wilfully strayed from the ways of God like a lost sheep; that I have yielded myself to the seductions of the world the flesh and the Devil; that I have resisted the convictions of con-

science, the admonitions of friends the pleadings of the sanctuary, and deliberately preferred the broad and downward road that leads to ruin and despair?

4. Do I realize that, as a member of Christ, I have been a spot and blemish upon His sacred body the Church, which He has purchased with His precious blood; that as a child of God, I have wandered from my Father's house and made myself unworthy even to be called His servant; that as an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, I have been thankless, and careless of my eternal portion, preferring the pleasures of sin, to the joys that are at God's right hand forever?

5. Do I truly repent of my folly and guilt; am I deeply sorry that I have disobeyed my Father and my God; that I have wounded my Redeemer, who was wounded for my transgressions; that I have grieved the Holy Spirit who is my sanctifier?

6. Do I forsake the sins which I pro-

fess to mourn ; do I cease to do evil ; do I hate lying, deceit, and every false way ; do I endeavor to subdue the love of the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life ; envy, malice, hatred, uncharitableness, and all the evil desires and passions which war against God and against my soul ?

7. Do I learn to do well ; do I perform as faithfully as I can what I know to be my duties in that state of life to which I am called ; am I obedient to those in authority over me, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God ; am I considerate, gentle, and kind towards my equals ; am I just, forbearing, and benevolent towards my inferiors ; do I redeem the time, making the best use I can of the talents and opportunities entrusted to me, knowing to whom I must give an account of my stewardship ; do I take pleasure in offices of love, as far as they are in my power ; do I give the cup of cold water

in the name of a disciple; do I make any sacrifice of self that I may do good unto others, and especially to them of the household of faith ; do I endeavor so to let my light shine before men, that they seeing my good works may glorify my Father which is in Heaven ?

8. Do I set God always before me ; do I realise that he searches and knows me, that He knoweth my down-sitting and up-rising, and understandeth my thoughts afar off; that He compasseth my path and my lying down, and is acquainted with all my ways ; that there is not a word in my tongue but He knoweth it altogether ? Can I say, I desire to do thy will, O my God,—my meat is to do the will of my Father in Heaven ? Do I feel my dependence upon Him for life, and health, and all earthly good things, and for the gracious supplies of that Holy Spirit, which He has promised to give to all who ask Him ? Do I seek these supplies in regular, daily, and ear-

nest prayer ; in the closet do I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant me according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; in the sanctuary, do I strive to control my thoughts, and to join in its prayers and praises, and in all its services, with the spirit and with the understanding ; can I say, how amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of Hosts, my soul hath a delight in them,—for a day in thy courts is better than a thousand ; I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness ?

9. What are my feelings toward the word of God ? Do I realize that it is in truth the word of God, which is able to save my soul ?—Do I see in it the wisdom which is from above ? Is it to me the sword of the spirit, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing a-

sunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of my heart? Has it slain in me my enmity to God and holiness? Can I say the entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple; thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee; thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path: Oh! how I love thy law—it is my meditation, all the day; the law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver; how sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth; through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way!

10. Do I feel that my best works fall infinitely short of the glory of God? Do I realize when I have done all that I can, I am an unprofitable servant? Do I know that my holiest actions are stained with sin, and need the cleansing of a

Saviour's blood ? Am I compelled from a conviction of my own utter weakness and unworthiness, to exclaim with the Apostle, O, wretched being that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? Can I say with him, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ my Lord ? Do I look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith, as my only hope ? Is He the LORD my righteousness, the propitiation for my sins through faith in his blood, the Lamb of God which taketh away my sins ? Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ? Do I put my whole trust in Him, knowing that his is the only name given under heaven, whereby I can be saved ? Do I love him who first loved me ? Do I make any sacrifice of self for Him ? Does the love of Christ constrain me ? Am I willing, am I ready to come out from the world, to confess Him before men, to dedicate to him my life and my all ? Yea, do I count all things but loss for the excellency of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; and count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him, and the power of this resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Oh my soul, can'st thou find in thine own experience any response to these glowing words? Then “why art thou so cast down, why art thou so disquieted within me? Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God !”

PRAYERS.

To be used with the other devotions of a Candidate.

O God, my Heavenly Father, be merciful to me a sinner. I acknowledge my

transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Oh, wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins. Give me to see, my God, how earthly, and sensual and vile I am ; how by thought, word, and deed I daily offend against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against me. Make me to be truly sorry for these my misdoings : make me earnestly to repent of them. O, make the remembrance of them grievous unto me, the burden of them intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father ! For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past, and grant that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Turn thou me, O good Lord, and so shall I be turned. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. O my Heavenly Father, I beseech of thee thy Holy Spirit, which thou hast promised to give to all who ask thee. I plead thine own promise. May I ask in sincerity, with a deep sense of my need; in faith, with a humble reliance on my Saviour; may I ask so as to receive. Pour into my heart, O Lord, the abundance of thy grace. Strengthen me with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. Deal bountifully with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word. Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. O make my heart to rejoice in thy statutes, and make me feel that they are more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter than honey and the honey comb. Make me to walk, O Lord, in the path of thy commandments,

and to experience that in keeping them there is great reward.

May thy blessed spirit teach me to know and love thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; and my Heavenly Father, may this time be to me a season of refreshing from thy presence. May I be enabled to obey the call which is now addressed to me. May I come out from the world, and confess my Saviour before men. Make me to believe on Him in my heart unto righteousness, and to confess him with my mouth, unto salvation. May I truly renounce for his sake, the Devil and his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. May I sincerely promise, by thy help, to keep the commandments of my God. O may I dedicate myself to thee, my Father, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier, looking unto Jesus as my Saviour and my Hope, and trusting for acceptance, only to His cross. Amen.

CONFIRMATION.

—They are taking the baptismal vow,
 Upon their conscious selves ; their own lips speak
 The solemn promise. Strongest sinews fail,
 And many a blooming, many a lovely cheek
 Under the holy fear of God turns pale,
 While on each head his lawn-robed Servant lays
 An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
 The Covenant. The Omnipotent will raise
 Their feeble souls.

I saw a mother's eye intently bent
 Upon a maiden trembling as she knelt ;
 In and for whom the pious Mother felt
 Things we may judge of by a light too faint ;
 Tell, if ye may, some star-crowned Muse or Saint !
 Tell what rushed in, from what she was relieved —
 Then when her child the hallowing touch received,
 And such vibration to the Mother went
 That tears burst forth amain. Did gleams appear ?
 Opened a vision of that blissful place
 Where dwells a sister-child ? And was power given
 Part of her lost One's glory back to trace
 Even to this Rite ? For thus she knelt, and, ere
 The Summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.

WORDSWORTH.

A PRAYER IMMEDIATELY BEFORE CONFIRMATION.

O God, the Father of Heaven, look in

mercy and forgiveness on thy child who desires to return to thee !

O God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, wash me wholly from my sins in thine own precious blood.

O God, the Holy Ghost, sanctifier of the faithful, take up thine abode in my heart, and make me a holy Temple to the Lord.

O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, accept the offering of myself which I make in soul and body, in heart and life, to thy service, now, and forever. Amen.

O, happy day that stays my choice
On thee my Saviour and my God,
Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell thy goodness all abroad.

O happy bond that seals my vows,
To Him who merits all my love,
Let cheerful anthems fill his house
While to his sacred throne I move.

'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
Deign gracious Lord to make me thine,
Help me through grace to follow on,
Glad to confess thy voice divine.

Here rest my oft divided heart
 Fixed on thy God, thy Saviour rest,
 Who with the world would grieve to part.
 When called on Angel's food to feast.

High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,
 That vow renewed shall daily hear
 'Till in life's latest hour I bow
 And bless in death a bond so dear.

A MEDITATION AFTER CONFIRMATION.

O my Redeemer, Captain of my salvation, I am now enlisted by my own act under thy sacred banner. O Thou, who didst triumph for me upon the cross, with garments stained with thine own blood, enable me to take up my cross and follow thee; enable me to have victory, and to triumph over sin, the world, and the Devil, and to continue thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.

Entitled now to every privilege of the gospel, may I seek at the table which thy love has spread, the food that shall nourish my soul unto everlasting life. O thou Bread of life, let me eat of thee, and live forever. O thou fountain of

Salvation, let me drink of thee, and be
filled with joy and peace in believing.

My God and is thy table spread,
And does thy cup with love o'erflow?
Thither be all thy children led,
And let them thy sweet mercies know.

Hail! sacred feast, which Jesus makes,
Rich banquet of his flesh and blood:
Thrice happy he who here partakes
That sacred stream, that heavenly food.

Why are its bounties all in vain
Before unwilling hearts displayed?
Was not for you the victim slain?
Are you forbid the children's bread?

O let thy table honour'd be,
And furnish'd well with joyful guests:
And may each soul salvation see,
That here its holy pledges tastes.

Drawn by thy quickening grace, O Lord.
In countless numbers let them come;
And gather from their Father's board,
The bread that lives beyond the tomb.

Nor let thy spreading Gospel rest,
Till through the world thy truth has run;
Till with this bread all men be blest,
Who see the light or feel the sun.

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00036730831

FOR USE ONLY IN
THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

